

§ 625.4 Standards for awards.

(a) If an eligible applicant prevails over the FCA in an adversary adjudication, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion thereof, the applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in the adjudication, or portion thereof, unless the position of the FCA over which the applicant prevailed was substantially justified.

(b) The position of the FCA includes:

(1) The position taken by the FCA in the adversary adjudication; and

(2) The action or inaction of the FCA upon which the adversary adjudication is based.

(c) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the FCA must prove that its position was substantially justified before an award may be denied to an otherwise eligible applicant.

(d) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the adversary adjudication or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

§ 625.5 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents, and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under these rules may exceed \$75 per hour. No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed the highest rate at which the FCA pays expert witnesses. However, an award also may include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or expert witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent, or expert witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent, or expert witness, the presiding officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent, or expert witness is in private practice, his or her customary fees for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated costs of the services;

(2) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the

attorney, agent, or expert witness ordinarily performs services;

(3) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(4) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the adversary adjudication; and

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(d) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, audit, engineering report, test, project, or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or other matter was necessary for the preparation of the applicant's case.

§ 625.6 Rulemaking on maximum rates for attorney fees.

(a) If warranted by an increase in the cost of living or by special circumstances (such as limited availability of attorneys qualified to handle certain types of proceedings), the FCA may adopt regulations providing that attorney fees may be awarded at a rate higher than \$75 per hour in some or all of the types of proceedings covered by this part. The FCA will conduct any rulemaking proceedings for this purpose under the informal rulemaking procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act.

(b) Any person may file with the FCA a petition for rulemaking to increase the maximum rate for attorney fees. The petition should identify the rate the petitioner believes the FCA should establish and the types of proceedings in which the rate should be used. It should also explain fully the reasons why the higher rate is warranted. The FCA will respond to the petition within 90 days after it is filed, by initiating a rulemaking proceeding, denying the petition, or taking other appropriate action.

§ 625.7 Awards against other agencies.

If an applicant is entitled to an award because it prevails over another agency of the United States that participates in or in any way is a part of an adversary adjudication before the FCA and that agency's position is not

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substantially justified, the award or an appropriate portion of the award shall be made against that agency.

Subpart B—Applicant Information Required

§ 625.10 Contents of application.

(a) An application for an award of fees and other expenses under the EAJA shall identify the applicant and the adversary adjudication for which an award is sought. The application shall show that the applicant has prevailed in the adversary adjudication. If the application is made on the basis of significant and discrete substantive issues on which the applicant prevailed, the issues must be specifically identified. The application also shall identify each position of the FCA or other agencies that the applicant alleges was not substantially justified. Unless the applicant is an individual, the application shall describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business and state the number of persons employed.

(b) The application shall include a statement that the applicant's net worth does not exceed \$2 million (if an individual) or \$7 million (for all other applicants, including their affiliates). However, an applicant may omit this statement if:

(1) It states that it has 500 employees or fewer and attaches a copy of a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) or, in the case of a tax-exempt organization not required to obtain a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on its exempt status, a statement that describes the basis for the applicant's belief that it qualifies under such section; or

(2) It states that it is a cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with 500 or fewer employees.

(c) The application shall state the total amount of fees and other expenses for which an award is sought.

(d) The application may include any other relevant matters that the applicant wishes the FCA to consider in de-

termining whether and in what amount an award should be made.

(e) The application shall be signed by the applicant or an authorized officer or attorney of the applicant. The application must contain a written verification under oath or under penalty of perjury that the information provided in the application and any supporting documents is accurate.

§ 625.11 Net worth exhibit.

(a) Each applicant, except a qualified tax-exempt organization or cooperative association, must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant and any affiliates (as defined in § 625.3(f)(1) of this part) as of the date when the adversary adjudication was initiated. The exhibit may be in any convenient form that provides full disclosure of the assets and liabilities of the applicant and its affiliates and is otherwise sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant qualifies under the standards in this part. The presiding officer may require an applicant to file additional information supporting its eligibility for an award.

(b) An applicant that objects to public disclosure of information in any portion of the net worth exhibit and believes there are legal grounds for withholding it from disclosure may submit that portion of the exhibit directly to the presiding officer in a sealed envelope labeled "Confidential Financial Information," accompanied by a motion under § 622.11 of this chapter to withhold the information from public disclosure. The motion shall describe the information sought to be withheld and explain, in detail, why it falls within one or more of the specific exemptions from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (1)–(9), why public disclosure of the information would adversely affect the applicant, and why disclosure is not required in the public interest. The material in question shall be served on counsel representing the FCA, but need not be served on any other party to the application proceeding. If the presiding officer, or the FCA Board pursuant to § 622.11(e) of